

engagement to form a generally cylindrical bearing;

said first and second arcuate components each including a lower portion defining a radially outwardly projecting boss;

a generally annular retaining flange having an annular recessed portion adapted to receive said projecting boss of each of said first and second components so as to retain said first and second arcuate components.

2. (Original) A lower bearing assembly according to claim 1, wherein each of said first and second arcuate components each define an inner semi-cylindrical surface having a coating of self-lubricating material.

3. (Original) A lower bearing assembly according to claim 2, wherein said self-lubricating material comprises a polyester resin base including polytetrafluorethylene.

4. (Currently amended) A lower bearing assembly adapted for installation on the hydraulically actuated landing gear system of an aircraft, said lower bearing assembly comprising:

a split bearing including first and second arcuate sleeve components adapted for mating engagement to form a generally cylindrical bearing sleeve, each of said arcuate components including a semi-cylindrical inner surface and a bottom portion;

each bottom portion including a radially outwardly projecting boss;

a generally annular retaining flange having an upper portion defining an annular groove adapted to retain said first and second arcuate components by receiving the bottom

portions thereof such that said projecting boss each of said first and second arcuate components is received in mating engagement with said annular groove.

5. (Original) A lower bearing assembly according to claim 4, wherein the inner semi-cylindrical surfaces of each of said first and second arcuate sleeve components includes a coating of material having a low coefficient of friction.

6. (Original) A lower bearing assembly according to claim 5, wherein said material having a low coefficient of friction includes a polyester resin base and polytetrafluorethylene.

Kindly add the following new claim:

7. (New) A lower bearing assembly according to claim 4, wherein said retaining flange further includes a lower portion defining an annular groove and a scrapper ring received within said lower portion annular groove.

REMARKS

The Office Action dated November 4, 2004 has been carefully considered. Applicant appreciates the Examiner's efforts in conducting a comprehensive examination.

Claims 1 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith, Jr. in view of Blakely et al. Claims 2, 3, 5, and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C.

103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith Jr. in view of Blakely et al, as applied to claims 1 and 4, and further in view of Babin et al.

Claims 1 and 4 have been amended. Claim 7 has been added. Claims 1 - 7 remain pending. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicant's invention comprises an improved split bearing for use with an aircraft landing gear assembly. The split bearing includes first and second semi-cylindrical bearing components adapted for installation in surrounding relation with the piston tube of a hydraulically actuated landing gear system of an aircraft. A retaining flange top portion secures the bearing components by receiving only the bottom portions of the split sleeve components. The retaining flange bottom portion further includes a lower groove for receiving a rubber scrapper ring that prevents debris from entering the bearing. Applicant's split bearing may thus be easily changed by simply lowering the retaining flange and removing the two arcuate sleeve components and replacing the components. Raising the retaining flange back into position secures the replacement bearing components.

U.S. Patent No. 4,616,387, issued to Smith Jr. discloses a cylindrical bearing consisting of first and second halves held in place by a shell (114). The shell disclosed by Smith is generally cylindrical and includes radially inwardly turned end flanges 130. Accordingly, the inwardly turned end flanges 130 do not allow for quick and easy replacement of the split bearing as they prevent the shell from being slidably separated from the bearing components. This is exactly the type of disadvantage that the Applicant's invention overcomes by providing split bearing components having radially outwardly projecting boss members that are received within a retaining flange groove. The ability to quickly replace the bearing components would be greatly complicated if the retaining flange

had inwardly turned portions engaging the bearing components and thus preventing slidable disengagement of the flange from the bearing halves.

U.S. Patent No. 4,848,934, issued to Blakely et al. fails to remedy the deficiencies of Smith Jr. Blakely merely discloses ring-shaped bearings for use with aircraft. Blakely does not disclose a split bearing configuration as disclosed by Applicant.

U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0160606, the Babin et al. reference, merely discloses a coating of polytetrafluorethylene on a bearing surface. The Babin reference otherwise fails to disclose a split bearing configuration.

The claims have been amended to a scope considered commensurate with the Examiner's comments and the cited prior art.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, the undersigned would appreciate a telephone conference in order to expedite this application.

This response is being filed on March 4, 2005 by certificate of mailing, along with a Petition for One Month Extension of Time and fee check for \$60.00, and is considered timely as the original response due date was February 4, 2005.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark D. Bowen, Reg. No. 39,914
Stearns Weaver Miller Weissler
Alhadeff & Sitterson, P.A.
200 East Broward Boulevard, Suite 1900
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301
(954) 462-9500

I:\W-IP\36846\004\responseoa020105.wpd